

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are pending in the present application. Independent claim 1 is directed to a polarizing plate. Claims 2-5, 9-12, and 19-20 depend directly or indirectly on claim 1. Independent claim 6 is directed to an optical member. Claims 7 and 21-22 depend on claim 6. Independent claim 8 is directed to a liquid crystal display. Claims 17 and 23-24 depend on claim 8. Independent claim 13 is directed to a process for producing a polarizing plate. Claims 14-18 depend directly or indirectly on claim 13.

In the Office Action, the previous art rejections have been withdrawn, but claims 1-5, 9-12 and 19-24 are now rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over US 3,531,351 to Buzzell (Buzzell) alone, claims 6-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Buzzell in view of US 4,545,648 to Shulman et al. (Shulman), and claims 13-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Buzzell in view of US 3,015,989 to Delangre et al. (Delangre).

It is alleged in particular in the Office Action that it would have been obvious “to have incorporated the water-soluble crosslinking agent and catalyst into the water solution of polyvinyl alcohol as the adhesive layer to maintain the dimensional stability of the polarizing plate laminate.”

The rejections are respectfully traversed. Contrary to the interpretation set forth in the Office Action, there would have been no motivation to incorporate the crosslinking agent and catalyst into a polyvinyl alcohol-based adhesive layer. In particular, Buzzell discloses that adding the crosslinking agent to form the polyvinyl alcohol polarizer films can help “to maintain the dimensional stability of the polymer against ambient humidity” (Buzzell at col. 5, lines 26-27). However, Buzzell is completely silent regarding whether adding a crosslinking agent and catalyst

into the adhesive layer would improve the dimensional stability of the polarizing plate laminate.

In other words, Buzzell teaches adding the crosslinking agent when making its polyvinyl alcohol-containing polarizer films to improve their dimensional stability, but Buzzell (i) fails to teach or suggest the desirability of improving the dimensional stability of the polyvinyl alcohol-containing adhesive itself, and (ii) is completely silent as to whether adding the crosslinking agent to the polyvinyl alcohol-containing adhesive would improve the dimensional stability of the laminate of polyvinyl alcohol-containing films.

In summary, a person of ordinary skill in the art, based on the disclosure of Buzzell, would not add a crosslinking agent and catalyst to a polyvinyl alcohol-containing adhesive, because Buzzell does not provide any suggestion or motivation to do so.

In contrast, the present inventors have found that when a transparent protective film bonded to at least one surface of the polyvinyl alcohol-based polarizing film through an adhesive layer comprising (i) a water-soluble crosslinking agent capable of crosslinking a vinyl alcohol-based polymer, and (ii) a catalyst, as recited in present claims 1, 6, 8, and 13, it is possible to improve considerably the resistance to peeling, and thus, the durability of a polarizing plate, as explained in particular on page 1, lines 18-21 and illustrated in particular in Table 1 on page 9 of the present specification. This feature of the presently claimed invention and its advantages are not taught or suggested in Buzzell. Further, there is no indication that any of the crosslinking agent and catalyst migrates inherently from the polarizer film of Buzzell into the adhesive, and the considerable difference in resistance to peeling demonstrated by the present inventors demonstrates the contrary. Since the other cited references fail to remedy the deficiencies of Buzzell, the present claims are not obvious over the cited references taken alone or in any

combination.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the rejections should be withdrawn.

In conclusion, the invention as presently claimed is patentable. It is believed that the claims are in allowable condition and a notice to that effect is earnestly requested.

In the event there is, in the Examiner's opinion, any outstanding issue and such issue may be resolved by means of a telephone interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of the response period. Please charge the fee for such extension and any other fees which may be required to our Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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